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KT photo | **Tim Bath**
Rob Burgess, Tribune night editor

House of Burgess: Nobody wants to see that

Weiner, Sanford, Spitzer, Filner can't be contained.

By Rob Burgess
Tribune columnist

I never thought basic political reportage could be deemed not safe for work. But lately, when I walk to my vehicle at night, I'm halfway on the lookout for public servants in raincoats ready to jump out at me from every alley.

In my May 1 column, "Wait, how did you get back in?", I wrote about the unlikely re-emergence of both former South Carolina governor and current U.S. Rep. Mark "Appalachian Trail" Sanford, and former congressman and current New York mayoral candidate Anthony "Carlos Danger" Weiner.

Since that column was published, Sanford defeated comedian Stephen Colbert's sister, Elizabeth Colbert Busch, in the special election for Tim Scott's old seat. And Weiner was riding high atop the polls in the wake of a front page New York Times Magazine article alongside his wife, Huma.

Everything was going so well. But then, the website The Dirty's editor Nik Richie broke his own rules to bring new uncensored photos of Weiner to light on July 23.

"Today is the first time in our company history that TheDirty.com has published extreme nude images without censor because New York deserves better leadership than this," wrote Richie.

This news was staggering as these messages were sent post scandal. Weiner's life fell apart, and still he couldn't help himself. To me, it's not what happened so much as how it happened.

It's the lying. It's the elaborate web of deceit associated with it. When he was first busted in 2011, he claimed hackers had infiltrated his Twitter account. He later admitted the truth and quit Congress, but not before wasting everyone's time with his squirming.

On July 23, he called a press conference in which he dismissed questions about the timelines involved in the sending of the explicit messages. And keep in mind, he was mailing these graphic representations to this young

woman in Princeton, Ind., even after that New York Times Magazine article I mentioned earlier. This was long after he had hit bottom.

It has only gotten worse for Weiner since then.

“In light of new revelations that Anthony Weiner continued to engage in lewd online behavior after he resigned from Congress two years ago, Weiner now trails Christine Quinn in the Democratic primary for New York City mayor,” read a NBC 4 New York/Wall Street Journal/Marist Poll released on Thursday. His campaign manager, Danny Keden, abruptly resigned the next day.

On Friday, but on the opposite coast, San Diego mayor Bob Filner announced he was entering a behavior counseling clinic to undergo two weeks of intensive therapy.

“What was perhaps most striking about Mr. Filner’s statement, which lasted less than three minutes, was that he did not mention the idea of resigning,” reported New York Times reporters Adam Nagourney and Ian Lovett. “His news conference came the day after four more women publicly accused the mayor of sexual harassment, in interviews on KPBS News, and when the San Diego County Democratic Party voted for him to step aside. In all, seven women have publicly accused the mayor of sexual harassment.”

On July 7, Elliot “Client 9” Spitzer announced his candidacy of New York City comptroller. Do these people have no shame? I guess if I’ve learned anything, Americans love a comeback story.

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